

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF SENEGALESE PRESIDENT SENGHOR

1. SUMMARY. SENEGALESE PRESIDENT SENGHOR'S VISIT TO HAITI, FEBRUARY 18-21, SERVED THE SHORT-TERM INTERESTS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS WELL, ALTHOUGH AN INDISCREET SENGALESE PRESS RELEASE EMBARRASSED SENGHOR AND IRRITATED THE YOUNG HAITIAN PRESIDENT. SENGHOR IMPRESSED OBSERVERS WITH HIS SENSITIVITY TOWARD HAITIAN CULTURAL VALUES AND HIS READINESS TO SUPPORT HAITI'S CAUSE IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FORUMS. THE TWO PRESIDENTS APPEAR TO HAVE ESTABLISHED A RELATIONSHIP OF MUTUAL RESPECT, AND SENGHOR WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED BY JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER'S INTELLIGENCE AND SOPHISTICATION. ARRANGEMENTS FUNCTIONED SMOOTHLY THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, THANKS TO STRENUOUS EFFORTS BY THE HAITIAN AUTHORITIES AND TO THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES COORDINATING ROLE PLAYED BY THE PRESIDENT'S CONTROVERSIAL AND AMBITIOUS SISTER, MARIE-DENISE DOMIQUE. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND. SENGHOR'S VISIT TO HAITIA CAME AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH, SINCE SENGHOR'S ORIGINL INTENTION IN COMING TO THE ANTILLES HAD BEEN TO VISIT HIS FRIEND AND FELLOW
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PHILOSOPHER AIME CESAIRE IN MARTINIQUE, AND IT WAS ONLY AFTER

HAITIAN URGING THAT HE AGREED TO INCLUDE HAITI ON THIS TRIP. THE HAITIAN INTEREST IN THE AFRICAN CONNECTION IS LONG-STANDING: DR. FRANCOIS DUVALIER HAD RECEIVED PRESIDENT TUBMAN OF LIBERIA, EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE OF ETHIOPIA, AND PRESIDENT AZIKIWE OF NIGERIA; AND PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER HAS HOSTED PRESIDENTS TOLBERT OF LIBERIA AND KAUNDE OF ZAMBIA. DUVALIER ORDERED ELABORATE PREPARATIONS TO RECEIVE SENGHOR WITH ALL HONORS AND GAVE HIS ELDER SISTER, MARIE-DENISE DOMINIQUE -- VISITING SINCE DECEMBER -- MAIN COORDINATING RESPONSIBILITIES. IN LARGE PART THANKS TO HER EFFORTS, THERE WERE NO HITCHES IN THE CAREFULLY PLANNED SCHEDULE, INCLUDING THE USUAL CEREMONIAL CALLS, A FORMAL STATE DINNER, A MUSICAL SOIREE AT THE PALACE, A LECTURE ON NEGRITUDE BY SENGHOR, AND A VISIT TO CAPE HAITIEN.

3. HAITI'S INTERESTS WELL SERVED. FOR HAITI, SEEKING INTERNATIONAL TIES AND EASIER ACCESS TO EUROPEAN MARKETS, THE OUTCOME WAS REASONABLY SATISFACTORY. ACCORDING TO THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE AND SENGHOR'S CONCLUDING PRESS CONFERENCE:

-- SENEGAL WILL SUPPORT HAITI'S APPLICATION TO ADHERE TO THE LOME CONVENTION AND THUS ENHANCE ITS PROSPECTS OF SHARING IN THE BENEFITS ACCRUING TO OTHER STATES ASSOCIATED WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S ECONOMIC SYSTEM. (WHETHER KEY EC MEMBERS WILL BE SWAYED BY THIS ENDORSEMENT IS ANOTHER QUESTION.)

-- SENGHOR WILL DISCUSS MEANS OF INCREASING FRENCH ECONOMIC AID TO HAITI WHEN HE MEETS WITH FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING NEXT MARCH (AN INTERVENTION WHICH MAY NOT SIT WELL WITH THE FRENCH, WHO ALREADY PROVIDE HAITI WITH GENEROUS ASSISTANCE).

-- SENEGAL WILL SEEK TO ARRANGE A CIVIL AVIATION ACCORD ENABLING AIR AFRIQUE TO INCLUDE PORT-AU-PRINCE ON ITS ROUTES TO THE ANTILLES.

-- PRESIDENT DUVALIER HAS AN INVITATION TO VISIT SENEGAL AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME (HE HAS A SIMILAR INVITATION TO VISIT ZAMBIA).

-- SENEGAL WILL HELP RESTORE SANS SOUCI PALACE, A SUPERB RUIN, WHICH ALONG WITH HENRI CHRISTOPHE'S FORTRESS, LA CITADELLE, DEEPLY IMPRESSED SENGHOR ON HIS SIDE TRIP TO CAPE HAITIEN. SENGHOR TOLD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAITIAN AUTHORITIES HE THOUGHT \$1 MILLION WOULD DO THE JOB, AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HE COULD RAISE A TENTH OF THAT SUM WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

-- UNDER A SEPARATE CULTURAL AGREEMENT SIGNED FEBRUARY 20, THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL PROMOTE EXCHANGES IN EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS, WITH A MIXED COMMISSION TO DESIGN PROJECTS, AND AN "INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES AND RESEARCH" AS A FIRST TANGIBLE

OUTCOME. THE IMPACT OF THE ACCORD, HOWEVER, AND THE FUTURE OF THE INSTITUTE DEPEND UPON RESPECTIVE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, A POINT NOT PUBLICLY ADDRESSED.

-- SENEGAL WILL SEEK TO HAVE HAITI TAKE MORE FREQUENT PART IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP OF STATES. (HAITI WILL APPROACH THIS PROSPECT WARILY.)

4. SENGHOR FINDS A CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ALLY. SENGHOR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN GENUINELY PLEASED BY HIS RECEPTION, PARTICULARLY IN CAPE HAITIEN, WHERE THRONGS OF ADMIRING HAITIANS WELCOMED HIM LIKE A NATIONAL HERO. SENGHOR WAS ALSO PLEASED BY THE APPRECIATIVE RESPONSE OF HAITIAN INTELLECTUALS TO HIS RICHLY ALLUSIVE LECTURE, ALTHOUGH HIS DEFINITION OF NEGRITUDE AS CULTURAL INTERMINGLING WAS DISPLEASING TO THOSE HAITIANS WHO HAVE LONG STRESSED BLACKNESS AS THE HALLMARK OF NEGRITUDE (IN PART TO USE IT AS A POLITICAL WEAPON AGAINST THE MULATTO ELITE). HIS SPEAKING STYLE, HIS REPUTATION AS A POET/PHILOSOPHER, AND HIS DIGNIFIED PRESENCE EVOKED ADMIRING COMMENTS. MORE SPECIFICALLY, WE UNDERSTAND THAT SENGHOR:

-- FOUND PRESIDENT DUVALIER MORE INTELLIGENT AND SOPHISTICATED THAN HE HAD EXPECTED;

-- FELT THAT HAITI COULD HELP HIM PLAY A MODERATING ROLE WITHIN THE OAU AND HOPED HE HAD FOUND A NEW RECRUIT TO JOIN THE EMBATTLED RANKS OF MODERATE FRANCOPHONE STATES.

5. A SENEGALESE PUBLIC RELATIONS GAFFE. GUESTS ATTENDING THE SENGHOR LECTURE FOUND ON THEIR SEATS A SPECIAL EDITION OF DAKAR'S LE SOLEIL WHICH CONTAINED, IN THE SECTION ON HAITI, A MOST UNFLATTERING ARTICLE ON DUVALIER. EVIDENTLY DRAWN FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY HAITIAN EXILES IN DAKAR, THE BRIEF ARTICLE DISPARAGED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DUVALIER'S LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS AND DESCRIBED MARIE-DENISE AS POLITICALLY MORE MATURE THAN HER BROTHER. AT THE LAST MINUTE DUVALIER CANCELLED PLANS TO ATTEND THE SENGHOR LECTURE AND ORDERED ALL COPIES OF THE ISSUE IMPOUNDED. SENGHOR IMMEDIATELY APOLOGIZED TO DUVALIER, AND THE HAPLESS LE SOLEIL EDITOR, BARA DIOUF, WAS ORDERED BACK TO DAKAR, HGT DURING WHETHER HE STILL HAD HIS JOB. HAITIANS IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT FOUND IT SHOCKING THAT SENGHOR COULD HAVE COMMITTED SUCH A BREACH OF COURTESY.

6. PROSPECTS. SENGHOR MAY OVERESTIMATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH HAITI WILL BE ACCEPTED BY, OR WILL WISH TO JOIN, THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES, BUT HE IS RIGHT IN COUNTING ON HAITI'S STAUNCHLY ANTI-COMMUNIST POSITION, AND HE MAY WELL FIND HAITI MORE PREPARED,

AFTER ANGOLA, TO JOIN FORCES WITH MODERATE LEADERS ON NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES. DUVALIER MAY OVERESTIMATE SENEGALESE LEVERAGE TO AFFECT HAITI'S INTERNATIONAL FORTUNES FAVORABLY. BUT BOTH MEN FOUND MUCH TO TAKE PRIDE IN DURING THIS REAFFIRMATION OF A MUTUALLY IMPORTANT CULTURAL AND ETHNIC RELATIONSHIP, AND PROBABLY NEITHER WILL BE GREATLY CONCERNED SHOULD THE PROMISES EXCHANGED PROVE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT.

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